



Newsletter December 2015



Vision: Making a difference today, for tomorrow

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to our December Newsletter. We have had, once again, a very busy, fun and focussed term. The children and young people have been involved in so many community projects, it is difficult to recall them all. Once again, bell ringing has been a resounding success; we are literally inundated with requests every year. The staff and pupils practice hard for their performances and never fail to give 100%; it is a joy to both watch and hear Mountjoy play.

Our whole school production mirrors the term's theme of music and takes us on a journey of music through the ages. Each group has a different decade to represent and, having seen the planning and practice that has taken place, I am very much looking forward to and anticipating the amazing performances that we will be treated to.

Alongside bells, we have had our harvest celebration and our carol concert. It was great to see how many parents attended these events - thank you, I appreciate it can be tricky to get to these, but the pupils so enjoy you being there.

Willow pupils were also successful in a local competition, coming second and winning boxes of biscuits - Sue and the Willow team were thrilled! The Post 16 pupils continue to offer services to the community such as recycling, car washing, supporting younger pupils and holding key responsibilities for the School Council.

We have also, through the Friends, had various charities support us with developing the outside areas, purchasing Rumble the Wonder Horse and supporting an increase in therapeutic interventions. I would encourage anyone to join the Friends and help support the sterling work that they do.

Alongside all of this fun, the children and young people have also made great strides on their IEP targets and academic progress. This is, of course, rightly the main focus of the school and I am thrilled at how many pupils regularly make outstanding progress. They are well supported by dedicated teachers and support staff that will go that extra mile for each and every pupil - thank you.

Work continues on the planning of the kitchen development. I do understand how frustrating it is to have to wait so long for news, but please believe me when I say we are chasing this every week and badgering those that can help us move this forward. It will happen, we just need patience!

The Potens development continues to progress well and Daun Tattersall has now joined our governing body. We will invite Daun to join Sandra at a coffee morning so that she can discuss in full the offer, ethos and support available from them. We continue to improve other practice such as our safeguarding systems; we now use One Team Logics, My Concern software and this will ensure that recording and reporting procedures are more robust than ever before.

We have also successfully increased our Pupil Admission Numbers and can now offer places for 51 pupils - a small increase, but definitely a step in the right direction. With all that has happened this term, the staff and children are in need of a good rest, so please enjoy your holiday, forget about school for a few weeks and have a great Christmas!

Jackie Shanks, Head Teacher

**Quick reminder - pupils
return to school on
Tuesday, 5 January 2016**

Curriculum

Christmas is approaching fast and this term has gone whizzing past!

Our topic this term has been music. Up and down the corridor we have heard a wide variety of music through the decades everything from Abba to Mozart, from Katy Perry to U2. It's been an interesting medley at times! We have played instruments, and we have learnt about sound and how we hear. We have made our own instruments and found facts about famous bands such as The Beatles and One Direction!

To escape the noise, we have all been out and about this term. Acorns have visited the donkeys in Sidmouth and ridden the horses with RDA. Willow, Maple and Ash have climbed the wall and braved the cold sea at Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre. The older students have been working hard at Magdalen, horse riding at the stables and carrying out their work experience.

Our teams have represented the school at various events, notably the boccia competition and the Challenge Day, and our famous bell ringers have begun the rounds playing the bells at various locations! And now, Christmas is approaching, the rain has begun. Christmas crafts have started and glitter is everywhere! We are all working hard towards our Christmas production of "Music through the Ages", which we hope as many of you as possible will be able to share with us and enjoy.

I wish each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Helen Farnell, Deputy Headteacher

Acorns

It has been a long, action packed term. The children have been fantastic and thank you for all your support throughout, especially for the attendance at and interest in the sing and sign session; it was lovely to have so many of you sign up. I hope you have been using these signs at home.

The theme of music has been a great topic for our children. It has given us the opportunity to explore singing, rhythm and rhyme, different music and the instruments. The older children have loved reading, "We're Going on a Bear Hunt", and have done some great work about it, whilst the nursery group have been exploring a very sensory approach to different nursery rhymes.

We have got lots of lovely activities coming up over Christmas, which we kick started with a great day out at the Donkey Sanctuary. Each child got to ride a donkey and see Father Christmas for a present.

I just wanted to say thank you very much for your support this term from me and the rest of the team and I will leave you in the capable hands of Emma who will start covering me in January.

Natalie and Acorns Team

Willow



We have been very busy with lots of learning this term. At the start of September, Willow went to Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre, where we enjoyed four weeks kayaking in the late summer sun, and two weeks climbing and caving.

In English, we have been looking at the book, "Animal Boogie", which we have all enjoyed watching and singing along to, and doing some writing and matching work.

In Science, one group have been looking at human bones and learning all about their own skeleton. We began the work with Mr Bones, and the children had to put him together, placing the magnetic bones in the right place to make the skeleton. In the first session, there was some interesting placing of bones, but by the end of session 3 all bones were correctly placed! The other group have been learning about sounds in the environment.



Willow have enjoyed their learning in Maths this term, which has included our weekly Numicon lesson, where a couple of pupils from Acorns have also joined us. A group has also worked on pattern and size this term, and there has been an introduction to money. If possible, can families please encourage your child to help pay for items in shops when you're all out and about.



In RE, we have explored the Muslim religion, wearing a topi and looking at the Quran, and the children enjoyed colouring in Islamic patterns.

We are now looking at the 60's for the Christmas production, so don't be surprised if the children come home singing Elvis or The Beatles! We hope you will all join us for the show at the end of term.

Sue and Willow Team

Maple

Maple class have had a very busy term. Some students have been out and about attending horse-riding sessions and enjoying outdoor education at WOEC. A small group also had some extra boccia lessons and attended a big tournament in Poole where they played well, winning one game 4-0!

In school, everyone has been working hard and making good progress. For technology, we have been learning textile skills, and each pupil has designed and made a beautiful felt notebook cover. We are now using the skills we have learned to create Christmas decorations. In art, we have been learning how to make models using Mod-Roc and each pupil has made a beautiful model lizard based on the work of Antoni Gaudi.

We have also enjoyed the school topic of music, and pupils have been learning the history of modern music, and have also been learning about sound in science. Even the decorations for the Beaminster Church Christmas tree had a musical theme!

Caroline and Maple Team

Cedar

Cedar class have had a fantastic term!!

We have enjoyed exploring a variety of musical styles through our topic and learning about some famous composers and singers. We have painted to music and participated well in sensory stories.

We love all the special days in the autumn term and had lots of fun celebrating Halloween, Fireworks Night and Remembrance Day. Bring on Christmas!

Tracey and Cedar Team

Ash

This term, we have enjoyed learning about Light in Science, investigating and exploring light sources, shadows, reflections and how the eye works.

We have found out about the Vikings, where they come from and how they travelled to Britain in our History lessons. We shall be interviewing a (friendly) Viking Chief towards the end of term and are busy preparing our questions to ask him.



In our English sessions, we have learnt about personal information and will be putting that information about ourselves into a hip hop rap!

We continue to participate in our off site activities - horse riding, shopping, Magdalen project and outings with our friends in Cedar class.

We wish you all a very Merry Christmas.

*Richard, Helen, Paula, Rachel and Cheryl
Ash Team*

Oak



This term Oak have been out and about as much as possible. Most have been to Magdalen for most of the term enjoying working on the farm. A couple of pupils have had the opportunity to work in the Ferne Animal Sanctuary shop in Bridport each week which they have done very successfully.



Our mini enterprise car wash scheme was successful until half-term; we hope it will start again in the spring. Alongside the work experience, some have improved their cycling skills while others have been working hard each week in the fitness suite.

School Council

Hello from the newly formed 2015-2016 school council. We have had a busy start to the academic year. It started with getting to know our new council members, and voting for our new chair. The team have decided what to spend the previous council budget on, and will now look to ordering items for play times.

They also organised their own Halloween disco, which the whole school enjoyed. Maple won the pumpkin carving competition.

The council have met with the steering group for the extension to West Bay park and helped with a photo shoot where a cheque was received for the planned work. The group have also decided to fund raise for the park themselves and will be discussing what to do at their next meeting, so we look forward to telling you about that soon.

This year's tree, at Bridport's United Church Christmas tree festival, will be decorated by some of the council members. We hope that you all get a chance to pop in and see the Mountjoy tree in all its glory.

On that note, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Chair and Taryn (Co-ordinator)

Shopping and cooking have been enjoyed by some; others will get their turn soon. Most of the group have worked hard with some travel training focusing on being safe walking in busy town areas, especially crossing the road safely.



In school we've worked to improve English, Maths and ICT skills. Some have begun work towards the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award. Those with therapy programmes have begun to take ownership of these which is good to see. ELSA sessions have looked at relationships and bullying. We've dipped in and out of the term topic to explore aspects of music; this will culminate in the grand performance that is the Christmas show!

All in all then, lots done and lots to look forward to! Happy Christmas from the Oak team, which at various times this term has featured Lorraine, Lisa B, Lisa M, Bryony and Kevin. Many thanks for your continued support.

Kevin and Oak Team



Family Liaison

Sandra.Hutchings@mountjoy.dorset.sch.uk

It seems that this newsletter comes around quicker each year; with Christmas firmly on its way, I am sure you will all be busy.

I want to thank you all for being part of the coffee mornings and getting involved with Mountjoy as you do in a variety of ways.

I do hope to get out and about visiting some of you in your homes, especially those of you who struggle to get to the school due to timing, work or transport.

The first coffee morning of the New Year will take place on Friday, 8 January at Bridport Children's Centre from 9.30 am - 12.00 pm.

 **newlife**
Foundation for disabled children

Need support or information?
Want to speak with a Newlife Nurse?

Newlife's Care Services Team readily use confidential translation services. We want you to feel comfortable when raising sensitive questions or discussing important matters

0800 902 0095

Simply call (free from UK mobiles and landlines) and inform a Nurse of your preferred language.

Newlife Nurses will provide caring emotional support and useful information regarding:

- Rare & complex conditions;
- Local & national services;
- Rights & benefits;
- Access to health & social;
- Care professionals;
- Delivery of care in the community.

I want you all to be aware that, as well as offering support and information, Newlife provides grants for essential equipment such as: pain relieving beds, wheelchairs, communication aids, and much more. Contact details as shown.

I hope you all have a lovely holiday and look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Sandra Hutchings - Family Liaison Officer

Friends of Mountjoy School

Since the last newsletter, the Friends have been very busy raising funds. We held a cream tea event at the Salt House in West Bay on 4 August. Unfortunately, the day wasn't so well attended as hoped, but we still managed to make a profit. We then held a car boot sale at Mountjoy on 26 September. Our latest event was our Christmas Fayre, held on 28 November, which was a fantastic success. We had a brilliant turn out of parents, staff and the local community. We have made a profit in excess of £900! The final total will be made available after 16 December when the draw will take place at the Christmas production. I would like to thank all of the people who helped out on the day and the Friday evening. Without everyone's support these events could not take place.

As you will probably already know, we have been granted £8,133 from the 2012 Health and Wellbeing Legacy Fund towards our sensory garden project, which will begin in January 2016.

In September, we took possession of a mechanical horse, 'Rumble', who will benefit our children with their therapy needs. When Brit Valley Rotary and Bridport Runners heard about 'Rumble', they donated £2,000 towards the purchase price of £3,291 (including air freight).

We have also purchased three bikes and two more scooters.

We were happy to supply the food for the Leavers' Party and three students' 18th birthday disco.

Please check the next newsletter for dates of future events.

Cheryl - Chair of Friends of Mountjoy School



Dates to Remember 2015 - 2016

Wednesday, 16 December	Christmas Production - 2.00 pm
Friday, 18 December	Last day of term
Monday, 21 December 2015 - Monday, 4 January 2016	Christmas Holidays
Monday, 4 January	Staff Training Day
Tuesday, 5 January	Pupils return to School
Friday, 8 January	Parent/Carer Coffee Morning - 9.30 am - 12.00 pm Bridport Children's Centre
Monday, 25 January - Wednesday, 27 January	Magdalen Farm Residential Trip classes to be confirmed
Tuesday, 2 February	Parent/Carer Coffee Morning - 9.30 am - 12.00 pm Poundbury, Dorchester
Thursday, 4 February	School photographer coming to Mountjoy
Monday, 15 February - Friday, 19 February	Half term week
Monday, 22 February	Pupils return to school
Tuesday, 1 March	Parent/Carer Coffee Morning 9.30 am - 12.00 pm Mountjoy School - Community Room
Thursday, 24 March	Last day of term
Friday, 25 March - Friday, 8 April	Easter Holidays
Monday, 11 April	Pupils return to school
Friday, 15 April	Parent/Carer Coffee Morning - 9.30 am - 12.00 pm Molly's Den
Monday, 2 May	Bank Holiday - School closed
Tuesday, 3 May	Parent/Carer Coffee Morning - 9.30 am - 12.00 pm Poundbury, Dorchester
Monday, 30 May - Friday, 3 June	Half term week
Monday, 6 June	Pupils return to school
Monday, 6 June - Friday, 10 June	Freshwater Residential Week classes to be confirmed
Friday, 10 June	Parent/Carer Coffee Morning 9.30 am - 12.00 pm Mountjoy School - Community Room
Saturday, 18 June	FOMS Summer Fayre to be confirmed
Monday, 20 June	Staff Training Day School closed to pupils
Monday, 27 June - Wednesday, 29 June	Magdalen Farm Residential Trip classes to be confirmed
Tuesday, 5 July	Parent/Carer Coffee Morning - 9.30 am - 12.00 pm Bridport Children's Centre
Wednesday, 20 July	Last day of term